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Unwanted Horses an Urgent Issue, Survey Says

by: Liz Brown

April 03 2010 Article # 16113

What to do with unwanted horses is the most urgent issue facing the equine industry, according to responses from a recent survey.

The findings are part of the American Horse Publications nationwide online survey, conducted from Oct. 15, 2009, to Jan. 31, 2010, which resulted in more than 11,000 responses. The survey is the largest ever of its kind for the United States.

Thirty percent of respondents reported that unwanted horses are the most pressing issue the equine industry faces, while 18% said that not having the option of slaughter is the most urgent issue. Other issues identified received between 0% and 8% of votes.

Respondents on the coasts are least likely to identify the lack of the slaughter option as an issue, while those in the central part of the country are more likely to identify it as important. Donna Ewing, founder of the Hooved Animal Rescue & Protection Society, believes this has to do with urban versus rural views. "The people who support a slaughter ban don't usually have an agricultural background," she said.

When asked to propose solutions to this issue, nearly eight times as many people supported slaughter as opposed it, with 22% of respondent stating the option should be available, while only about 3% felt it should not be an alternative. About another 11% thought some kind of breeding restriction is needed, and just under 10% felt better education about breeding would help solve the unwanted horse problem.

**Readers are cautioned to seek the advice of a qualified veterinarian
before proceeding with any diagnosis, treatment, or therapy.**



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